

► Languages Spoken

About 90 languages are being spoken by students in Missouri schools. While many have only a few speakers, these languages represent the linguistic and cultural heritage that has always been present in the Midwest. The following chart presents the most commonly spoken languages and their fluctuation during the last few years.

Top 10 languages spoken in Missouri schools (2007 data not available)

Language	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Percent change*
1. Spanish	5,098	6,264	7,545	10,107	10,339	10,400	0.59%
2. Bosnian/Serbo/Croatian	2,176	2,137	2,139	2,466	1,987	1,557	-22%
3. Vietnamese	760	768	844	1,080	959	1,058	10%
4. Somali	379	437	492	489	625	644	3%
5. Arabic	450	398	498	573	646	542	-16%
6. Russian	266	318	347	390	453	487	8%
7. Chinese	335	355	353	364	465	445	-4%
8. Korean	190	252	302	350	502	357	-29%
9. African tribal	58	75	73	145	72	231	221%
10. French	121	93	110	165	131	169	29%

*Percent change refers to the difference between the 2005 and 2006 figures.

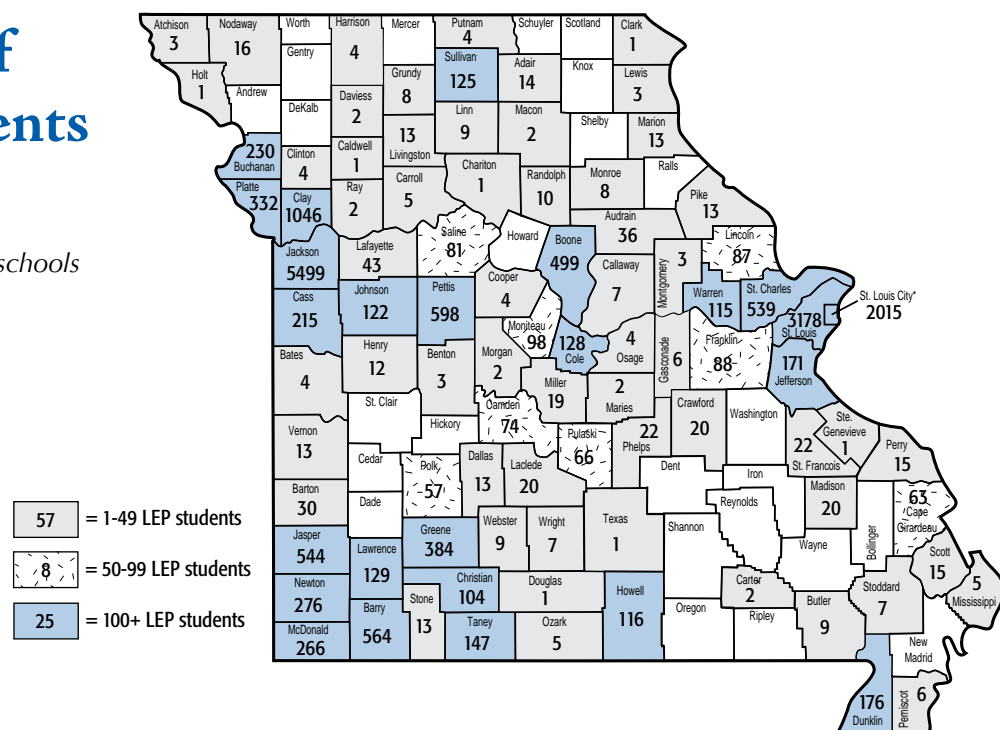
These language totals reflect a couple of factors — an influx of refugees and the expansion of labor attractive to migrant workers. The totals also suggest that some of the more established groups are moving on or their children are no longer considered to be ELLs, or both.

► Conclusion

The improved data collection of information regarding ELLs is helping the state to see where its priorities should lie. Continued rapid growth in some suburban and many rural areas requires that all schools be prepared to meet ELLs' needs. Districts must adopt a plan to identify, assess and serve ELLs. Refer to the "Educating Linguistically Diverse Students" handbook for additional information.

Number of LEP Students by County

*Total includes charter schools



► Parental Legal Rights

Under Title III of the NCLB Act, schools are required to provide informed parental notification as to why a child is in need of placement in a specialized language-instruction program. Parents have the right to choose among instruction programs if several types are offered. Parents must be informed no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year. During the school year, this time frame is two weeks. Parents also have the right to immediately remove their child from a program for ELLs. Schools are required to implement effective means of parental outreach to encourage parents to become informed and active participants in their child's language-instruction program. Since the legislation does not specify whether parents should be notified before assessing ELLs, DESE does not require districts to seek parental authorization to test children for this classification. Details on parental notification are located in Appendix E of the "Educating Linguistically Diverse Students" handbook, which can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/discretionarygrants/bilingual-esol/index.html>.

► Foreign-Exchange Students

The NCLB Act does not discourage or prevent schools from enrolling foreign-exchange students. These programs are valuable and enrich the education of all parties involved. Schools have the discretion to enroll or not enroll foreign students even though they may be treated like residents during their attendance year. The state of Missouri highly recommends that school districts enroll these students. Assessment results for foreign-exchange students enrolled for less than a year, even if the students are LEP, should not be included in the school-level measurements of Adequate Yearly Progress required by the NCLB Act. Schools should review their own exchange-student policies.

► Summary and Regional Totals

Statewide count of ELLs

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Percent change*
Public schools	10,238	11,535	13,121	14,855	18,745	19,092	18,605	18,670	0.35%

ELLs in the St. Louis and Kansas City public school districts

School district	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Percent change*
St. Louis	2,433	3,004	2,672	2,768	2,905	2,673	2,735	1,755	-36%
Kansas City	2,068	2,066	2,426	3,102	5,244	3,986	3,168	3,679	16%

ELLs enrolled in high-growth districts

School district	2006	2007	Percent change*
Monett	300	368	23%
St. Joseph	155	230	48%
Springfield	258	294	14%
Carthage R-IX	252	409	62%
Lebanon	8	20	150%
Waynesville R-VI	11	51	364%
Pettis County R-V	26	40	54%
Spokane R-VII	9	33	267%
Scuola Vita Nuova	132	157	19%

These districts experienced high growth in enrolled ELLs for various reasons including their location as suburban and/or near processing-plant districts and/or near heavy farming areas. Factors contributing to the continued rise in the number of students from non-English language backgrounds include the growth of poultry processing, meatpacking and agricultural jobs; the enrollment of foreign students at institutions of higher education; the growth of Missouri's economy; and the internationalization of business.

*Percent change refers to the difference between the 2006 and 2007 figures.

► Implementing the ELL Program

School districts are required to hire highly qualified teachers to ensure quality instruction. The local context determines whether a school needs a paraprofessional under the supervision of a certified teacher or a full-time, ESOL-endorsed teacher. The ELL coordinator and the program implementer must work closely to address the ELLs' needs. Districts enrolling 20 or more ELLs must hire a full-time, ESOL-endorsed teacher. When enrolling more than 20 ELLs, the district must strictly follow the local student-teacher ratio. (General considerations on class size can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/sia/msip/faq&answers.html>.) Districts hiring classroom paraprofessionals must be prepared to hire ESOL-endorsed teachers as soon as the district enrolls 20 ELLs. A paraprofessional can be supported to meet the credentials leading to endorsement with Title III or other local funds. All paraprofessionals serving ELLs must have at least 60 hours of college credit. All students needing services must be included; there should not be a waiting list of ELLs in a district. ELLs cannot be retained solely because of language barriers. Grades represent what a student understands about the subject matter after appropriate modifications and interventions have been documented, not the level of English language proficiency. Professional-development programs are available at <http://www.mo-mell.org> or from an instructional specialist for technical assistance in local capacity building. The success of a program may be tied to how often districts evaluate their programs and address weaknesses. Continuing the education of program personnel could be helpful in bringing in new and fresh ideas, and talking to experienced neighboring districts might be the best strategy a district could use.

► Service Expectations

School districts are responsible for providing a language-instruction educational program that increases the English proficiency and academic achievement of ELLs. Whether districts receive funds from the state or federal level, ELLs should be held to the state academic-content and academic-achievement standards established for all children. DESE has no mandated curriculum to serve ELLs. Through the Missouri Migrant Education and English Language Learning (MELL) program, DESE can assist districts in developing a local plan for educating ELLs that maintains compliance with state and federal requirements while allowing for local variations. Districts have the students' results in terms of language abilities, which are key factors in determining what kind of services to provide and how often to deliver them. The expectation is that programs will enable children to speak, write, listen, read and comprehend the English language and meet challenging state academic-content and academic-achievement standards. Schools are required to conduct a two-year follow-up after a child is no longer receiving services. The "Educating Linguistically Diverse Students" handbook contains expectations and a checklist to help districts evaluate their programs. Suggestions in the handbook include instructional approaches, program evaluations and cultural considerations. The bottom line is that districts are looking at whether ELLs are able to access the school's curriculum with all of its cultural and social implications. School district policies, resources and context will influence the type of services, and the district context will determine the approach and content as stated. However, the language-instruction curriculum must be tied to scientifically based research on teaching ELLs. It must have demonstrated effectiveness, which involves the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to educational activities and programs. For the complete definition, refer to ESEA section 9101 (37), page 969, which can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/discretionarygrants>.

► U.S. Residency and Immigration

The Supreme Court ruled in Plyler v. Doe (1982) that legal residency in the United States is not a requirement for enrolling in a public school. Schools should not explicitly or implicitly ask for any information related to U.S. residency, including Social Security numbers, passports, visas, green cards, etc. Even if volunteered by parents, it is advisable to politely refuse such information. A student cannot be denied admission to a school or participation in a program based on the student's undocumented status. Such discrimination would be a denial of the equal protection of the law in violation of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution.



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